1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

173 All sources agree that just after Hotu-matua's canoe had reached shore, Vakai (Vakai-a-hiva) gave birth to a boy, the *ariki*, Tuu-ma-heke, but my version is the only one which connects the birth of Tuu-ma-heke with that of a girl, Ava-reipua, who was born to Tuu-ko-ihu's wife at the same moment. Ava-reipua is given by Routledge (194, p. 278) as the wife of Hineriru the leader of the second canoe, and by Roussel (190, p. 357) as the wife of Hotu-matua. Although there is some possibility that Ava-reipua was the wife of Tuu-ko-ihu, the births of a girl and boy, both children of the canoe leaders, taking place at the same time cannot be merely an incident invented by my informant. Such parallel situations are too characteristic of this type of narrative not to be accepted as ancient.

844 The cutting of the navel and rites performed by Tuu-ko-ihu over the head of Tuu-ma-heke (p. 65) had a double importance. They fixed the pattern for all future birth ceremonies until a very recent date, and perhaps they were connected with the name Pito-te-henua which is sometimes considered the original name for Easter Island. Whether this name has some link with the legend of the cutting of the navel cord of Tuu-ma-heke is difficult to ascertain, but a passage in the native version of Hotu-matua's story conveys that meaning.

Hotu-matua was credited with having brought to Easter Island not only the cultivated plants but many plants which grew on the island long before the Polynesians occupied it, and all the land animals known to the natives. The plants imported by Hotu-matua are enumerated by Roussel (190, p. 357): taro, sweet potatoes, yams, bananas, *toro-miro*, *ngaoho*, and sugar cane. With the exception of the *toro-miro* and the *ngaoho*, these plants were actually introduced by the Polynesians from their original home. Ash trees (*marikuru*, not true ash) and sandalwood were considered by the natives as endemic species, but Tepano places them among the plants which were aboard Hotu-matua's canoes. Brown (27, p. 41) refers to a man, Koteke (ko Teke), who "was the guardian of the plants and seeds." Having forgotten the sandalwood (*naunau*) he was obliged to go back to Marae-renga to fetch it. Thomson's early account (215, p. 526) includes potatoes, tobacco, and "the seeds of various plants, including the paper mulberry and the toro-miro trees." This last list shows that at an early date the natives attributed to their first king plants which they had only recently received from Europeans. The same tendency is manifest in regard to domestic animals—pigs which were given to the islanders by Europeans are said to have been brought by the first immigrants as well as the fowls which the first discoverers found on the island. In his desire to heighten the glory of Hotu-matua, Tepano tried to convince me that cats and dogs were among the animals which came at that remote period. He alluded also to the *kekepu*, a rather strange beast which was very like a "pig or a cow" but is probably a large turtle which has disappeared from the

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

island. On the other hand, pigs, cattle, horses, and sheep were admittedly of very recent introduction.

Many other things were probably assigned to the first king, among them the origin of the signs on the tablets. Thomson's tradition (215, p. 514) asserts that "Hotu-matua, the first king possessed the knowledge of this written language, and brought with him to the island sixty-seven tablets containing allegories, traditions, genealogical tablets, and proverbs relating to the land from which he had migrated." Routledge (194, p. 279) attributes the knowledge of reading and writing to Hineriru who "wrote rongo-rongo on paper he brought with him." Hotu-matua and Tuu-ko-ihu were, in a sense, culture heroes, and there must have been a general tendency to make them the originators of many inventions and sacred institutions.

Immediately after landing the people started to till the soil, planting the cuttings and tubers brought from Marae-renga. During the first three months, while they waited for the crops to be harvested, "they subsisted entirely upon fish, turtle, and the nuts of a creeping-plant found growing along the ground, which was named moki-oone" (215, p. 527).

THE FIGHT WITH OROI

The next episode in Hotu-matua's legend has been recorded in almost identical terms by three main sources. It may be called the "fight with Oroi and the killing of Oroi." Oroi was Hotu-matua's most bitter enemy: Thomson (215, p. 528) makes him the unsuccessful rival of Hotu-matua's brother (Machaa), and Routledge (194, p. 279) says that he was the killer of Hotu-matua's children in Marae-renga.

Ko Oroi he piko mai i runga i te vaka o Tuu-ko-ihu, i oho mai ai mai hiva mai Marae-renga. He piko mai Oroi i raro i te vaka o Tuu-ko-ihu. He oho mai tau vaka era, he tomo ki uta ki Hanga-o-hio. He oho mai te tangata, he marere. He oho ki uta i te po, i piko mai nei Oroi. He tomo rua ki uta, he noho i uta nei. Ku tomo takoa ana te vaka o Hotu-matua. He tomo ana, he poreko ana ko Tuu-ma-heke te poki, i poreko a Hotu-matua i te kainga nei ko te Pito-o-te-henua. He poreko rua hoki te poki a Tuu-ko-ihu, ariki tamahahine ko Ava-reipua te ariki a Tuu-ko-ihu, o toona vaka. He noho te tangata. He oho atu Tuu-ko-ihu, he hakahiti i te ata o te ariki o Tuu-ma-heke. He oho a Tuu-ko-ihu ki te pito nanangi o te ariki o Tuu-ma-heke. He oti te nanangi e Tuu-ko-ihu, he hoki, he nanangi i te pito o taana ariki tamahahine ko Ava-reipua.

Oroi concealed himself in the boat of Tuu-ko-ihu,[a] when he came from abroad from Marae-renga. Oroi was hidden in the interior of the boat of Tuu-ko-ihu. This boat arrived, it landed at Hanga-o-hio. The people came [ashore], they scattered. Oroi went ashore at night, hiding. He also landed on the shore, he stayed ashore. The canoe of Hotu-matua had landed also. When he landed, the child Tuu-ma-heke was born to Hotu-matua in the land [called] the Navel-of-the-land. A child was also born to Tuu-ko-ihu, the chiefess Ava-reipua of the chief Tuu-ko-ihu, on his canoe. The people settled down. Tuu-ko-ihu went, he made magic for the chief Tuu-ma-heke. Tuu-ko-ihu came to bite the navel cord of the chief Tuu-ma-heke. Tuu-ko-ihu finished the cutting, he returned, he bit the navel cord of his chiefess Ava-reipua.

[a] According to Thomson, the boat of Hotu-matua.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

843 431 firstlings), and was perpetuated long after the natives were converted to Christianity. After the food was removed, the pit of the oven was carefully filled in so that no rats could get into it, for if any food scraps were taken by a rat, the child would die. The father of the pregnant woman could make an earth oven and present it to the husband's relatives, but this gift had no ceremonial value.

DELIVERY

● 844 Before delivery a black stone was heated in an open fire, wrapped in bulrushes, and put under the parturient. This practice was supposed to stimulate labor pains (121, pp. 659-660). My informants did not give any information about this custom.

A woman in labor delivers in a squatting position. She kneels on the floor, reclining against her husband, who assumes the same position behind her. The husband or some other person assists the parturient by holding her under her armpits and massaging her stomach with both hands crossed on the navel region. Relatives and friends gather in the house to comfort the woman.

At the moment of delivery the man who ties the navel cord (*tangata hahau pito*) is called in. The tying of the navel cord is sacred and must be performed according to ritual (pp. 64-65). At the present time only five persons on the island know how to bind the navel; they are Juan Tepano, Mateo Beriberi, Timoteo Pakarati, Santiago Pakarati, and Leon Rahoroa. The first knot (*hahau a te matau*, string of the right) is tied after the string has made transverse turns around the navel cord passing from left to right. After three more transverse turns passing from right to left, the second knot (*hahau patu mauí*, string of the left) is tied. These knots keep the child's strength in his body. The navel cord is cut by a boy or girl (*kope* or *vie nagi pito*, young man or woman who bites the navel), who cuts with the teeth or an [465] obsidian knife—formerly they preferred to bite it. The cord cutter was paid with fowls and sweet potatoes. Sometimes he received a young cock which he could not kill lest the strength of the new-born child be destroyed. He could give the cock to a foreigner, but usually it was allowed to die with age. [787] Generally the cord cutter must tell what he dreamed the night before. If he saw cows or stars it was a favorable sign for the child. Anything related to the skies was a good sign, but falling stars or any falling thing was believed [845] to portend ill-luck. Modern Easter Islanders retain this belief in the significance of omens. The word *topa-tini* is used for children that are born by breech presentation.

846 Most ceremonial customs dealing with disposal of the umbilical cord have become obsolete. In ancient times the wound was smeared with red ocher (*kiea*) from a place called Te Tiamo, near Poike. Sometimes the umbilical cord and placenta were put into a calabash and taken to the shore by the

I: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

child's paternal grandmother who threw them into the sea as she pronounced a charm (*ivi-atua*): "Ka oho, kangaro ki hiva!" (May it be lost in a foreign country!) Sometimes the cord was buried under stone, and a charm pronounced over it: "Ka noho hiohio koe i toou kainga!" (May you stay strong in your country!) The land in which the umbilical cord was concealed was tapu; if anyone trod upon it, his legs were covered with white spots (*kino*). Ahu Hanga-varevare, near Tahai, is one of the places where navel cords were hidden. In 1886 Easter Island natives told Thomson that the people who walked over certain rocks near Ana-hoi-hangaroa were afflicted with sore feet. Thomson (215, p. 484) remarks, "We received many solemn warnings in regard to it."

Immediately after birth the child was washed in a large calabash filled with warm water heated with hot stones. According to Knoche (121, p. 660) hot, flat stones were applied to the stomach of the mother after childbirth, to keep the waist without folds. I heard no mention of this custom and the pitiful condition of young women after several childbirths does not testify to the efficiency of this precaution. A woman who has had children is called *heipara*. The same word applies to a plant which produces young shoots.

BIRTH FEAST

A feast was celebrated on the day of the child's birth (*te topanga*). The father's family presented a gift of food to the mother's family. As at the pregnancy feast, the woman ate first or, at her suggestion, her husband started the meal. It was forbidden to cook sweet potatoes in the oven. The oven was tapu and refuse was buried carefully in the ground. Two feasts were given for the first-born child only, whose name was given by the father's brother or sister.

CHILDHOOD

A small child, until he is 6 months old, is a *puepue*; at 6 months he becomes a *poki-tua-huri* (child-who-can-turn). When the child was 6 or 7 months old, his father's brother cut his hair with an obsidian point (*mataa*). At the same time a brother or cousin of his mother gave him a basket containing three or five chickens. This ceremony was called *puoko varu* (hair cutting). When the child began to creep, a maternal uncle gave him a basket with fowls (*kete hakaraka*, basket of crawling). Another present was given to him when he put on his first breechcloth of tapa (*hami-haka-hune*). At 8 or 10 years of age he was tattooed on his legs. At this time his maternal uncle offered him 20 or 30 fowls called *moa o te kona* (fowls for the legs) which became tapu; they could not be eaten by the family but could be traded to a foreigner or transferred to another family, according to the rules of the *koro* (p. 346).

The child was surrounded by many tapus. His head was considered sacred

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

not as complete as they might be, and may tend to be weighted in that all four men were related in one way or another. However this paper, and one on trading techniques which I hope to publish at a future date, show quite clearly that advanced acculturation on the island is, for the most part, only material culture deep and has as yet penetrated only sporadically into the social organization of the people.

BIRTH

Except for a ceremony at the birth of a first child, there appears to be no regularized ritual for births as such. At the present moment an expectant mother either goes to the Naval-run hospital for delivery, or stays at home where her child is delivered with the aid of a midwife. I could learn of no pre-natal or post-parture taboos enforced on either the parents or the child. The rubbing of a fine red iron oxide powder into the baby's navel may have once had ceremonial significance but is now explained as merely an aid in the drying up of the umbilical cord.

It is apparently only the first child, especially a boy child, whose birth is fraught with a danger that must be assuaged by ceremony. Once the ceremony has been completed, however, a time for general celebration and feasting is immediately at hand.

Upon the occasion of the first birth to a married couple the father-in-law of the child's mother immediately prepares a small *umu*, i.e., a meal prepared in a pit oven, which is allowed to cook through the night. At the break of dawn on the following day the immediate families of both the child's parents open the *umu* but do not touch the inclosed food until the new mother has first partaken of it to "bring luck to her baby." After she has eaten this token meal, these relatives finish this initial *umu* and immediately begin preparations for a large *umu* feast for their friends and relatives in celebration of the birth. As with the inter-familial exchange of gifts at the time of a wedding, the respective families of the new parents each prepare their own *umu* and, upon its completion, present it to the opposite family, after which both meals are pooled for the general feasting of friends and relatives. Since such a feast may have to provide for a large portion of the population, each member of the extended family may be called upon to furnish a quantity of food in the form of chickens, eggs, *camotes* or sweet potatoes, etc. Even friends may be called upon and "if they have food beyond their needs they will give to the *umu*." Each friend or relative coming to the feast brings with him, or her, a small *umu* gift for the new mother. This usually consists of a small, wrapped bundle containing chicken or, perhaps, *camote*. It was never made

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

177 586 648 ties from the island's administrators that its incidence in the past few years is said to have dropped noticeably.

177 764 799 It is in the matter of death and burial ritual that the church has shown a strong influence amounting to almost complete substitution of foreign for indigenous custom. However, the ancient feast formerly held on the day of death continues to be celebrated, along with the enforcement of certain eating taboos on the members of the deceased's family. The only influence the church has had on this celebration is to change its time to the day of burial. Whereas most of the natives are now seemingly content to have their deceased relatives go through the church ritual and be buried in the Catholic cemetery, I gathered a number of contemporary accounts of elderly men who, becoming ill, have gone to a secret cave to die. During our visit one old man became sick and disappeared from the village for almost two weeks. Since he worked for the sheep ranch, the administration attempted to find out where he had gone and what had happened to him. Considerable questioning brought forth the same answer, that the old man believed he was about to die and had probably gone to his secret cave.[8] In time he returned, well and healthy, but remained completely vague as to where he had been during his absence. As for the burial of the dead in ancient *ahus*, a secretly practiced custom in 1880,[9] I could learn nothing and, from all indications, this practice has ceased.

177 844 [648] Beside the government's influence in lowering the incidence of divorce, it has been responsible in no small degree for a certain amount of change in the early sector of the life cycle. Thus, with the presence of a Naval-controlled hospital, doctor, and midwife, it must be presumed that much of the ancient practice surrounding the delivery of a baby, including the method of tying and severing the umbilical cord, has given way to more modern medical practices. However, it is 114 177 852 interesting to note that the early custom of smearing red ocher into the umbilical wound continues up to the present time, along with the ceremonial *umu* given by the father's family to that of the mother, and at which time the mother must still eat the first food.[10] In this connection it should be noted that, while Métraux refers to this *umu* as a feast, my own informants seemed to regard it more as a [178] ceremonial partaking of food.[11] That such may be the case is further strengthened by their description of an immediately following feast for friends and relatives in celebration of the first born child. The latter is not recorded by Métraux and

8 For an unsuccessful attempt at self-interment in a secret cave in 1922, see P. Sebastian Englert, *La Tierra de Hotu Matu'a* (Santiago, 1948), p. 52.

9 Métraux, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

10 *Idem*, pp. 102-103.

11 *Idem*, p. 103.